



PODICEPS AUSTRALIS, *Gould.*

Australian Tippet Grebe.

Podiceps Australis, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., August 13, 1844.

Ká-lee, Aborigines of the lowland districts of Western Australia.

Diver, of the Colonists.

THIS beautiful species of Grebe, which differs but little from the *Podiceps cristatus* of Europe, inhabits the inland waters of Van Diemen's Land, and the whole of the southern portions of the continent of Australia, wherever localities present themselves favourable to its existence. It gives a decided preference to those broad mere-like sheets of water, whose depth is not too great for the growth of rushes and other aquatic plants, among which it constructs its floating nest and rears its progeny. It not only dives extremely well, but stems the billows with amazing power. I have frequently observed it on the upper part of the Derwent, swimming against wind and tide in a manner that truly surprised me.

In describing this bird as distinct from the *Podiceps cristatus*, I admit that I am making a species on very slender grounds; it will be seen, however, that the Australian bird is rather larger in size, and has the frill fuller and of a blacker colour than the European species. My own opinion is, that birds may be quite as nearly alike as these and yet have had a distinct origin, and consequently be distinct species, and I am guided in this opinion by the great law of representation, which I see carried out so beautifully in opposite parts of the world, and even on the opposite portions of the same continent.

The beautiful frill which adorns the neck of the *P. Australis* is acquired in the spring, and being worn during the breeding-season is again cast off, the face then becoming of a greyish white, or similar in colour to the other part of the neck.

The sexes are at all times alike in plumage; both have the frill of the neck to an equal extent, but the female is generally the smallest in size.

Crown of the head and occipital tufts black; frill black at the outer edge and rich chestnut in the centre, gradually passing into buffy white on the face; upper surface and wings dark brown; scapularies and secondaries pure white; all the under surface silvery white, stained with brown and chestnut on the flanks; irides red; bill dark horn-colour; upper surface of the tarsi and toes dark olive-green, under surface pale yellow.

The Plate represents an adult male of the natural size in the breeding plumage.